

## In this issue

This 'open' issue takes up some topics regarding content and methods that have been discussed in previous issues of this journal. At the same time, it also sets a new course. The article section includes two contributions on American history, three on the history of the Federal Republic of Germany, and one addressing a historical topic of global relevance. *Thomas Hertfelder* introduces and interprets Dorothea Lange's photo cycle 'Migrant Mother', which dates back to the Great Depression. The importance of this cycle goes beyond the pictorial memory of the United States. Hertfelder deliberately interprets the most famous picture in the context of the seven photos that comprise the series, which is on display in its entirety for the first time here. He reconstructs the surprising receptions of these photos and thus provides a further case study in contemporary visual history. *Olaf Stieglitz* addresses the phase of American history associated with Senator McCarthy, in which anti-communism influenced the political and cultural scene especially strongly. Using Foucault's concept of governmentality, which has been discussed in an earlier issue of this journal (2/2006), Stieglitz in particular scrutinises the justifications that were used to publicly legitimise denunciations. He thus pursues the question of how denunciations could become 'a positively connoted part of liberal governance', a notion which is disturbing from the point of view of democratic theory. However, he does not from the outset regard denunciations from a normative perspective, but rather fathoms their mechanisms.

In some ways, *Pascal Eitler's* contribution, which addresses the phenomenon 'New Age' in the Federal Republic of Germany during the 1970s and 1980s, can also be read as a continuation of the governmentality debate. On the one hand, Eitler points out that religious questions and yearnings played a greater role during this period than is generally assumed. On the other hand, he shows how adherents of 'New Age' expressed their religiosity in terms of a body cult, a fascination with India and the Far East, as well as the adaptation of paradigms from the natural sciences. At the same time, this contribution follows up on certain themes from the previous issue (3/2006), concerning the 1970s. The articles by *Christopher Kopper* and *Gerhard Paul* also deal with the history of the Federal Republic, but with a focus on the 1950s and 1960s. While Kopper explores the increasing significance of package tourism and tourism generally, Paul traces the rise and fall of 'Bruno', the figure of the cigarette brand HB in advertising. According to the author, this figure is symbolic for the rising living standards in the early Federal Republic. Both articles, which were written independently of one another, complement each other by combining aspects of everyday history and the history of mentalities in postwar West German society with perspectives from the fields of economic history and business history.

*Marc Frey* also contributes an article that deals with American history, and even encompasses global history and history of science. Before the backdrop of contemporary debates on demographic development trends he poses the questions when, by whom, and why the growth of the world's population was defined and came to be regarded as a problem, and even as a threat. A relatively small but very active and strategically skilled circle of experts succeeded in gaining the support of influential American foundations between 1945 and 1975, and then influenced US government policy concerning specific assumptions about the 'demographic transition'. In the end, the topic was even put on the agenda of the United Nations. This was significant in the dual context of the Cold War and decolonisation. Frey's case study on 'the ways in which social problems are put on a scientific basis' (Lutz Raphael) strikingly demonstrates how expert opinions guided by interest groups that are at first rather marginal can consolidate into apparently timeless certainties.

The debate section addresses fundamental questions concerning the presentation of contemporary history in museums. It provides more in-depth views on previously published exhibition reviews, but also takes up the main themes of 'Zeitgeschichte-online' about the Red Army Faction exhibition of 2005 and the permanent exhibition of the German Historical Museum.<sup>1</sup> *Hans-Ulrich Thamer, Burkhard Asmuss, Kristiane Janeke, Detlef Hoffmann, and Katrin Pieper* offer their views on current issues and general problems arising during the conception of contemporary history exhibits. It is certainly not to be taken for granted that despite competition from film, television, and the internet, these exhibitions are quite popular and even gaining in popularity. From the perspective of historical research, this is undoubtedly a positive development. However, there is a growing responsibility not only to increase the number of visitors, but also to ensure the quality of these exhibitions (according to criteria that are yet to be clearly defined – especially in the field of contemporary history). The essays published in this issue should be understood as a stimulus for further discussion.

The sources section portrays two momentous documentary archives which play a central role in contemporary historical research. *Jan Erik Schulte* introduces the Archive of the International Tracing Service (Archiv des Internationalen Suchdienstes) in Arolsen, and *Andreas Kunz* presents the Central Office of the Regional State Judicial Administration (Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen) in Ludwigsburg. Both of these institutions not only contain materials relevant to contemporary history, but also have long histories of their own, which is relevant in order to understand their resources. The majority of materials in the Tracing Service Archive, which dates back to the

---

<sup>1</sup> See <<http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/md=RAF-Inhalt>> and <<http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/md=DHM-Geschichtsbilder>>.

Second World War and the postwar years, have only recently become accessible to scholars. Besides carrying out research on National Socialism and the Second World War, scholars there, as well as in Ludwigsburg, now have the opportunity to explore topics from before and after 1945 in an overarching context.

In the review section, *Susanne König* traces the history of the German Museum of Hygiene (Deutsches Hygiene-Museum) in Dresden and portrays its current permanent exhibition. This corresponds to the theme of the debate section, but also to the contributions on governmentality. The depiction, modeling, and systematisation of human bodies are among the museum's main themes. They are presented with regard to their relevance for the history of science as well as contemporary interests. In the section 'rediscovered classics', *Werner Bühner* reminisces on Ludwig Erhard's book *Wohlstand für alle* (Prosperity for All), which was published fifty years ago. Although for some time now, proponents of a 'new social market-economy' refer to Erhard, his book should be regarded as a historical document rather than as a programmatic pamphlet for our times. In her review of Robert Paxton's *Vichy France*, published in 1972, *Claudia Prinz* reintroduces a real classic, which not only caused a public uproar in France at the time, but also encouraged many in-depth and critical studies on the character of the Vichy regime. *Stephan Scheiper* investigates the attempt of the English journalist Jillian Becker to understand the activities of the Red Army Faction in terms of the title of her book *Hitler's Children*, as early as 1977. Even though this book is written episodically rather than analytically, Becker's focus on generations draws our attention to 'traditions of terror' in a readable and memorable fashion.<sup>2</sup> As usual, the issue closes with a review digest including references to important new publications in contemporary history.

This edition is special not only as far as its cover design and breadth are concerned. In the fourth year of our journal, it is also the tenth issue to be published. This does not necessarily call for an anniversary, but it is a welcome occasion to thank all those involved in the production of this journal for their collaboration and support – the members of the advisory board and the external reviewers, our publisher Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht and the German Research Foundation (DFG), our subscribers, and especially the many authors without whose dedication, competence, and confidence this journal would not be what it is.

The Editors

(translation: Eva Schissler)

---

<sup>2</sup> See <<http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/md=RAF-Geschichte-Inhalt>> for further contributions and extensive material on the history and reception of the Red Army Faction.